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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART I. AFRICA

Section 4 - Cameroon

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03329

I.4 CAMEROON

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At 31 December 1993, Cameroon hosted a refugee population of 44,013 refugees, of whom 43,153 were from Chad, 160 were from Equatorial Guinea and 700 from various other countries. A total of 2,047 were assisted by UNHCR, of whom 1,545 were Chadians accommodated in the settlement at Poli/Faro, 127 Chadians in urban areas and 375 other urban refugees of various origins. Amongst the Chadians in the rural areas there was a high percentage of women and children, whereas the urban caseload consisted mainly of adult males. In 1993 a last group of seven Namibian students repatriated with UNHCR assistance.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

2. During 1993, a status determination exercise, conducted because of the increased number of applications for asylum arising from changes in national legislation, revealed that 612 Chadians did not qualify for refugee status. Over the same period, 564 Chadian refugees repatriated and there were 2,575 new arrivals from Chad escaping conflict in the Lake Chad area and in the south. More than 1,500 of the new arrivals were accommodated at the Poli/Faro settlement. Some of the new arrivals were from the old caseload who had previously repatriated.

3. In the second half of 1993, 145 asylum-seekers arrived from Equatorial Guinea. They received food assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Events in west and central Africa and continuing political instability in Zaire, resulted in close to 300 new arrivals from the region into Cameroon, some of whom were in need of assistance.

Programme objectives and priorities

4. For the past two years, it has been planned to scale down UNHCR's presence in Cameroon and hand over to the Government the rural settlement which was opened in 1982 for Chadian refugees in Poli/Faro. Sub-Office Garoua, in the north, was closed in June 1992, leaving the Branch Office in Yaounde to surpervise the implementing partner. However, the continuous movements of Chadian refugees to and from Cameroon have somewhat hindered the preparations for final handing over of the programme to the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. New influxes have also made it difficult to scale down UNHCR's presence, now planned for the end of 1994. Meanwhile, repatriation remains the main objective for the majority of the Chadian refugees.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

5. New implementing agencies have been sought to replace the existing implementing partner in the north. Caritas was identified for counselling and social services and negotiations have begun with the Council of Protestant

Churches of Cameroon for the eventual implementation of activities in the education sector. The Presbyterian Church of Cameroon has been proposed for implementation of the higher education programme.

6. The World Food Programme (WFP) has provided food for 1,545 Chadian refugees at Poli/Faro under its local development programme. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has given assistance in the area of family health and has provided medical supplies for a value of CFAF 568,285. The Chinese Embassy has made a donation of 500 blankets for the new arrivals from Chad. As noted above, the ICRC has provided food and cooking pots for the 145 new arrivals from Equatorial Guinea (5.5 metric tons of rice and 0.9 metric tons of beans). Catholic Relief Services donated medicines worth $ 27,442 to Caritas. Voluntary workers from Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Spain have assisted UNHCR in the refugee status determination exercise.

General Programmes

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

7. The prevailing economic situation and unemployment rate among nationals in Cameroon has made it increasingly difficult for unskilled refugees to have access to gainful employment, necessitating the continuation of basic assistance under the project. The requirements for a separate office for the new partner, Caritas, increased agency operational support costs, which were accommodated within the care and maintenance project budget. The Namibian education programme terminated in June 1993 when the last seven students repatriated, six having successfully completed their studies in Buea.

8. For the first time since 1988, new arrivals from Chad outnumbered repatriants considerably. Out of 1,000 estimated voluntary repatriation assistance beneficiaries, only 591 have actually repatriated, 564 being Chadians, and the budget was reduced accordingly. At the same time the local settlement programme had to be increased to accommodate the new arrivals at Poli/Faro. Given the high percentage of women and children amongst the newcomers from Chad, emphasis has been put on the mother and childcare programme, with the assistance of UNICEF. This activity will continue in 1994 with the renovation of health centres and schools.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

9. Twenty secondary students are expected to be assisted in the 1994/1995 academic year. It is planned to hand over education activities to an implementing agency during the course of 1994, in view of the scaling down of UNHCR's presence.

10. It is planned to repatriate 600 refugees, mostly Chadians, in 1994 for which an allocation of $ 55,800 has been approved.

11. At the Poli/Faro settlement it is planned to introduce a kindergarten class for the large number of children of pre-school age who arrived in 1993.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

Care and maintenance

12. It is planned to merge part of the care and maintenance programme into the local settlement activities and to carry out training activities for unskilled urban refugees in 1995.

Voluntary repatriation

13. The number of candidates for voluntary repatriation is estimated at 1,000 Chadians and ten refugees of other origins, with a reduced provision mainly due to the devaluation of the local currency. Local transport in convoys of Chadians from Poli/Faro to the border will be arranged by the implementing partner.

Local settlement

14. Based on past experience, an allocation has been provided for new arrivals. In line with the new Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and WFP, which stipulates that UNHCR should provide food for caseloads of less than 5,000 persons, a provision for food assistance for Chadians at Poli/Faro has been reintroduced into the UNHCR programme.

Special Programmes

Education Account

15. A total of 25 students are continuing their studies during the 1993/1994 academic year. It is expected that the same 25 students will continue in the coming academic year of 1994/1995. Given the funding constraints in the Education Account, only those students who successfully completed their studies in the preceding year will benefit from scholarships in 1995. The estimated number of beneficiaries has thus been reduced to 20.

Other Trust Funds

16. In 1993, there were ten students accepted under the German Albert Einstein Academic Initiative (DAFI) programme, of whom seven were Chadians, one Central African, one Rwandese and one Liberian. Nine students are expected to continue in 1994, of whom three will benefit from special assistance for preparation of their theses. Nine refugee students are again expected to benefit from scholarships in 1995.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

17. Expenditure was slightly higher than foreseen primarily because of several missions from Headquarters to provide support in administrative and financial matters during the extended special leave of the Administrative Assistant. For security reasons, the Branch Office moved into new premises in 1993, the cost of

which could be absorbed due to the reduction in rent paid for the new office premises and savings made under communications.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

18. Negotiations with new agencies will continue in 1994 with a view to handing over the implementation of UNHCR projects. Preparation of staff and restructuring of functions for the take-over of administration by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will continue in 1994. Owing to the renewed influx of refugees as well as the need to train new staff in the UNHCR financial management system, it was decided to postpone the scaling down of UNHCR's presence until December 1994. As a consequence, all eight posts (Representative and seven local posts), as well as the Junior Professional Officer line, have been extended from 1 July to the end of the year.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

19. The staffing level in 1995 will be reduced to one National Officer (or Programme Assistant) post supported by a Secretary and a Driver. They are to be under the administrative supervision of the UNDP Resident Representative.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN CAMEROON

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
149.8	160.7	168.6	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	38.2
97.7	59.2	55.8	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	34.0
197.6	204.8	86.4	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	303.9
0.2 a/	–	–	RESETTLEMENT	–
–	–	380.9	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	108.0
445.3	**424.7**	**691.7**	**SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS**	**484.1**
416.1	133.4	55.7	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	43.6
861.4	**558.1**	**747.4**	**TOTAL (1)**	**527.7**
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
105.0	77.9	77.9	EDUCATION ACCOUNT 20 university scholarships	52.3
56.0	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Various types of assistance	–
76.3	94.5	30.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	30.0
237.3	**172.4**	**107.9**	**TOTAL (2)**	**82.3**
1,098.7	**730.5**	**855.3**	**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**610.0**

a/ obligation incurred against overall allocation